son with Giolitti, Tittoni, or Sforza; a nonentity in comparison with Turatti, Traves, or Bissolati. But he was a man of tremendous energy, an egotist with insatiable ambition. His proclamations were good enough to incite the simple people. When read in the newspapers, his speeches were cheap trash, but people who heard him at mass meetings told me he could electrify an audience. But his main strength was the fact that he was the first among the Western politicians who had studied the November coup in Petrograd and learned from it how to prepare for and carry out such an affair.

Mussolini understood that anarchy was paving his way to power. Beginning in the autumn of 1920, he directed all his efforts toward increasing tension and disorder in the country. His Black Shirts pretended that they were fighting the radicals and Socialists in labor unions and municipal councils, but they did not attempt to oust them by winning elections. Their weapons were pistols and knives. In a particular skirmish it was not always possible to determine which side had fired first, but the Fascists held the upper hand because of their better organization and ruthlessness. Moreover, the essential for Mussolini was not to win each clash but to keep the country in a state of creeping civil war.

Like Hitler in Germany a decade later, Mussolini found allies in the left wing of the labor movement, among the Communists and their sympathizers. They believed that the rising tide of anarchy would carry them to power and concentrated all their efforts on fighting the moderate Socialists and liberal non-Socialist groups. We left Italy before Mussolini's victory, but the march on Rome was not the decisive battle in his rise to power. Rather it was a dramatic finale, similar to the storming of the Winter Palace in Petrograd and the burning of the Reichstag in Berlin—a spectacular celebration of the end of a long campaign to undermine and destroy the democratic institutions of a nation paralyzed by confusion, divided against itself, and unable to defend its freedom against the resolute and purposefully organized minority.

Our work with the Georgian mission in Rome proceeded fairly sucessfully. Among other tasks, it included negotiations with a group of Italian banks on a coal concession in Georgia, a rather complicated and ambitious project. But at that time the political campaign was more important for the Georgian Republic than economic projects, and Jordania asked us to go to Paris, where this campaign was centered.